

# CONTEST & EVENT IDEAS FOR UNITED WAY CAMPAIGN



**America's Funniest Office or Home Video** – A company or home video camera can capture highlights from the Day of Caring event. Show to staff by selling tickets, soda, and popcorn. If video is a hit, sell copies, raffle it or use as an incentive.

**Auctions** - Silent Auction – have bid sheets for each item noting the donor, the value, minimum bid, and bid increments.

**Baby Photos/Pet Photos to match up with employees** – People love to guess, and to be right about their answer! Ask staff to bring in childhood or baby photos, and ask staff to guess who's who. The person with the most correct answers wins a prize, and the announcement could be at an event to promote the campaign. Another option is to have folks bring in pictures of their pets and staff has to guess who belongs to whom.

**Barbeque** – Burgers, hot dogs, anything tastes better grilled! Staff could bring accompaniments like salads, chips, desserts, beverages, etc. A company-wide barbecue is a great opportunity to boost staff morale, and could be planned in conjunction with a United Way rally.

**Balloon Pop with prize message inside** – Publish a list of prizes, set a price, and have employees purchase balloons. Pop them to find out what you've won, or have a thank you inside when not enough prizes for each balloon purchased.

**Battle of the Blenders** – It can be healthy; it can be creative, as long as it's yummy and refreshing. Make it a challenge – come up with categories – most creative, most delicious, guess the secret ingredient (tell all of them but one), etc. You can offer samples for a fee and have tasters vote, or have folks pay per glass.

**Bowl-a-thon** - Employees pay a fee you set to participate. Give prizes to the top bowler(s). Bowl at your local lanes, or borrow/purchase a plastic set and have fun right at work.

**Breakfast of Champions** – Use this for a kick-off, wrap-up or special event. Have executives do the cooking. Charge for admission.

**Breakfast (Lunch or Dinner) with the Boss** – Ask the CEO or a high-level management person if he/she would be willing to treat the "highest bidder" employee to a meal (or personally deliver one to their desk). You can also include a service, such as cleaning off the winner's car on a snowstorm day, personally baking a dessert, etc.

**Car Wash** – Set your date, time and, most important, an enthusiastic team. Recruit your CEO and management team to join in. Offer the service to fellow employees or to the public if your venue permits. Promote and publicize the event to get as much participation as possible. If it is open only to fellow employees, how about a special prize for the dirtiest vehicle? Take photos and offer them for sale.

**Office Carnival** – Beanbag toss, pie eating contests, three legged races, and more. Charge to participate in activities. Additional activities could include a "hoop-shoot", hula-hoop contest, ring toss, pie throwing, bubble blowing, cakewalks, bake sale, hot dogs.

**Casual/Crazy/Jeans/Dressing with a theme/Day** – This can be an on-going fundraiser. Sell stickers (you set the price) to allow employees to dress casually for the day. Step it up a notch and have "themes", i.e. beach party, favorite sports team day, outrageous sock day, etc.

**Coin War** – Do this by department or sites. Determine which coins are "positives" – i.e., pennies can be a point apiece, and any silver/other coins and paper money are "negatives" deducted from the amount. In this case, sabotage is acceptable. The team with the most money at the end wins (after figuring the positives vs. the negatives), but all money collected goes to United Way.

**Children's Drawing Contest** – Have a poster contest for the employee's children. The children would design a poster about what United Way means to them.

**Compliment-o-grams** – Make up special forms and sell them to employees as an anonymous way to give a compliment to someone in the office. The delivery person is sworn to secrecy. Charge for each compliment.

**Cook-offs: (Chili, cookie, best recipe)** - Who doesn't like to share what they cook best, and who wouldn't love to sample it? Choose one type of food and have participants prepare it "their" way, or do a pot luck cookout have staff surprise each other with a dish of their choice. Charge \$ to participate, \$ to eat and vote, or "voting rights" could be a separate fee. Then folks can vote for their favorite over and over, as long as they pay per vote! Then have a small prize (or a plaque, certificate or ribbon) for the winner(s). Post results (with photo if possible) on bulletin boards, in your company newsletter, etc.

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**Games** - Guessing games, trivia questions, Millionaire, United Way Bingo, etc. Folks enjoy games to be challenged, to laugh, and in some cases they're in for the winning! Use this opportunity for all three with games and contests that can last for an hour or for the duration of your campaign. Some ideas are: Guess the number of candies in the jar; Prizes can be modest or elaborate, based on your budget, creativity, or ability to get donations.

**Healthy Giving** – Campaign team or each department could host a special event to not only raise dollars, but to improve the health of co-workers. Ask workers in the health care field to donate their time and expertise, i.e., for a stress reduction class, chair massage, Yoga class(es), etc. You can set up a health fair with personal trainer consultants.

**Ice Cream Social** – This is always a favorite. Make your own sundaes, milkshakes, cones, etc. This could be a fund-raiser or a thank you. Either way it's a winner!

**Jail for Bail** – Lock 'em up and throw away the key – at least until he/she raises enough bail \$\$ to “Get out of Jail”. No “Get out of Jail” free card in this game, just as many donations as it takes to reach the amount of bail set. A new twist is to have teams calling for pledges to release their “prisoner” from jail. They would call family, friends, or neighbors, and the team that raises the most money (within a pre-determined timeframe) receives a small prize.

**Karaoke/Dance Party** – Do as a fund-raiser, or as a team building opportunity. Have participants pay \$2.00 to enter, and provide them with a list of songs and pledge sheet (in advance of the event). Participants ask co-workers to pledge an amount of money. At the event, have a box of props (funny hats, boas, and other fun costume items) for the singers. Singers can perform individually or as a group. Do a dance event, where pledges are also requested for a pre-determined amount of time or a number of songs. Another version would have employees bidding on staff they want to hear sing or dance, and having someone videotape the event to sell copies.

**Late-to-a-meeting Fee** – pick a day, pick a week, or during your company's campaign time. Put this in your campaign publicity so everyone will be warned. Make 'em pay right on the spot, or set whatever rules you think will bring the most laughs (and \$\$)!

**Laugh Olympics** – Make up silly events for staff to complete in, and have everyone pay to play. Examples: Simon Says, wastebasket toss, who can eat the most m & m's in 30 seconds, who can spell United Way backwards the fastest, etc. Non-players may bet on who they think will win.

**Picnic** – On or off grounds, fresh air and a picnic lunch is a winning combination. Include volleyball or outdoor games to add to the enjoyment.

**Pumpkin Carving** – As campaign time falls in the “fall”, pumpkins are everywhere and are popular items for decorating, eating and carving. Purchase or ask for a donation of them, and let everyone carve away. Charge to carve, charge to vote, and award small prizes for different categories – most creative, scariest, etc.

**Recycle for Dollars (and the environment!)** – Do a bottles and cans drive during your campaign and donate the proceeds as a special event. This could be on going, with a different department taking the lead each month. The department raising the most money wins a pizza party, ice cream party, etc.

**Raffles** – Any type of raffle will work, but knowing your co-workers will net you the greatest profits. Gift certificates, tickets, lottery tree, items of any sort, foods, homemade articles, services such as massage, lawn care, etc. Themed gift baskets look lovely and draw substantial bids. (Monies won may subject to taxes.) Baked goods, candy, popcorn, (any food will do), cookbooks, coupon books, craft items, miscellaneous donated items, or books of recipes, jokes, gardening tips, etc. compiled by employees.

**Spelling Bee** – There are a variety of ways to host this: Charge an entry fee for each participant. The winner receives the “Dan Quayle Spelling Bee” award, blue ribbon or the like. No entry fee, but the losing team/individual pays for each misspelled word until he/she/they drop out. Anyone not playing can place bets on who will win.

**Sports Contests/Office Olympics**- Golf/mini-golf/putting contest, basketball, volleyball, softball, touch football, croquet, ping pong, fun runs/walks, chair races, hula hoops, bicycle rides with sponsorships, etc.)

**Ugly Items (tie, hat, jewelry, lamp, etc.)** – Staff pay to play, and to vote. Votes can be unlimited, but the voter pays each time. Staff members could solicit their own votes, and the person with the most money in hand at the end of the day wins the prize. If time permits have a parade of contestants, or take photos to place on bulletin boards.

**United Way Jingle Contest** – Employees write jingles for the United Way. Participants pay to enter the contest, and co-workers pay to vote. The winner receives a small prize and/or recognition in the company newsletter, etc.

**United Way 007** – Clues are given out to employees, who pay to play. The first person to guess the person, object, etc. from the clues wins the prize. Or, each clue has its own answer, and whoever has the most correct answers at the end wins.

**Wine Tasting** – For the connoisseur or anyone who enjoys wine. Pay to participate, and have rating sheets for each wine being tested.